

he were fowys; for soothly, he ne sholde  
nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to synne,  
but yeven his body and al his herte to the  
service of Jhesu Crist, & therof doon hym  
hommage. For soothly, oure sweete Lord  
Jhesu Crist hath spared us do debonairly  
in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of  
mannes soule, a sory song we myghten  
alle synge.

Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur  
secunda pars eiusdem.

**T**HE seconde partie of penitence is confessionioun, that is signe of contricioun. Now shul ye understonde what is confessionioun, and whether it ought nedes be doon or noon; and whiche thynges been covenable to verrey confessionioun. ¶ first shalthrow understonde that confessionioun is verrey shewing of synnes to the preest; this is to seyn, Verray, for he mooste confessen hym of alle the condiciouns that bilongen to his synne, as ferforth as he kan. Al moot be seyd, and nothyng excused, ne hyd, ne for-wrapped, and noght avaunte him of his goode werkes. And fartherover, it is neces-sarie to understonde whennes that synnes spryngyn, and how they encreessen, and whiche they been. ¶ Of the spryngynge of synnes seith Seint Paul in this wise: that Right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thurgh that synne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred into alle men that synned. And this man was Adam, by whom synne entred into this world when he brak the comauendement of God. And therefore, he that first was so myghty that he sholde nat have dyed, bicam swich oon that he mooste nedes dye, whether he wolde or noon; and al his progenye in this world that in thilke man synned.

**L**OORKE, that in thestaat of innocence, whan Adam and Eve naked weren in Paradys, and nothyng ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was moost wylf of all othere beestes that God hadde makyd, seyde to the woman: Why comaunded God to yow, yesholde nat eten of every tree in Paradys? The woman answerde: Of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we feden us, but soothly, of the fruyt of the tree that is in the myddel of Paradys, God forbad us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest peraurent we sholde dyen. The serpent seyde to the woman: Nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, God woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowynge good and harm.

[illegible]

**N**OW, as for to speken of the firste  
coveitise, that is concupiscence after  
the lawe of oure membres, that were  
lawefulle ymaked and by rightful iug-  
gement of God; I seye, forasmuch as man  
is nat obeisaunt to God, that is his Lord,  
therfore is the flessch to hym disobedient  
thurgh concupiscence, which yet is clyped  
norrisinge of synne, & occasion of synne.  
Therefore, al the while that a man hath in  
hym the payne of concupiscence, it is im-  
possible but he be tempted somtime, and  
moeved in his flessch to synne. And this  
thyng may nat faill as long as he lyveth in  
may wel wexe fieble & faill, by vertu of bap-  
tesme & by the grace of God thurgh pen-  
itence; but fully he shal it nevere quenech,  
that he neshal somtyme be moeved in hym  
self, but if he were alrefreyded by sickness,  
or by malefice of sorcerie, or colde drynthe.  
For lo, what seith Saint Paul: The flessch  
coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit  
agayn the flessch, they be enso contrarie.

as stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon  
as he wolde. The same Saint Paul, after  
his grette penance in water and in lond; in  
water by nyght & by day, in greet peril and  
in greet payne, in lond, in fampyne, in thurst,  
in greet coold, and dloothless, and ones ston  
in coold, and dloothless, yet seyd he: Alas  
almost to the deeth, yet seyd he: Alas  
I carfey man, who shal delivere me fro the  
prisyson of my carfey body? And Saint  
Jerome, whereas he hadde no compaignye  
in desert, whereas he hadde no compaignye  
but of wilde beastes, whereas he ne hadde  
nometre but herbes, & water to his drynke,  
ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which  
his flesh was blak as an Ethiopeen for  
heete, & ny destroyed for coold, yet seyd  
he: That the brennyng of lecherie boyled  
in all his body. Wherefore, I woot wel syker-  
ly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that  
they ne be nat tempted in hir body. Wit-  
nesse on Saint Jame the Apostel, that  
seith: That Every wight is tempted in his  
owne concupiscence; that is to seyn, that  
overich of us hath matere and occasion to  
be tempted of the norisseyng of synne  
that is in his body. And therefore seith  
Saint John the evaungelist: If that we seyn  
that we both withoute synne, we deceyve  
us selve, and trouthe is nat in us.

**N**ow shal ye understande in what manere that synne wexeth or encreaseth in man. The firste thyng is thilke norisynge of synne, of which Ispak bifore, thilke fleschly concupiscence. And after that comth the subieccioun of the deuel, this is to seyn, the deueles bely, with which he bloweth in man the fir of fleschly concupiscence. And after that, a man bi-tyrmeth hym whieether he wol don, or no, thilke thyng to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde & weve the firste entynge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no synne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feeleth he anon a flambe of delit. And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen hym wel, or elles he wol falle anon into consentynge of synne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme & place. And of this matere seith Moyses by the deuel in this manere: The feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wilked suggestioun, and I wole hente hym by moeyning or styrnyng of synne. I wol departe my prisie or my praye by deliberacioun; and my lust shal ben accomplied in delit; I wol drawe my sword in consentynge; for certes, right as a sword departeth a thyng in two peces, right so consentynge departeth God fro man: And thanne wol I lisen hym with myn hand in dede of synne; thus seith the feend. For certes, thanne is a man at deed in soule. And thus is synne accomplied by temptacioun, by

delit, and by consentynge; and thanne is  
the synne cleped actueel.

**F**OR SO THE, synne is in two man-  
ners; outher it is venial, or deedly  
synne. Soothly, whan man loveth  
any creature moore than Jhesu Crist oure  
Creatour, thanne is it deedly synne. And  
venial synne is it, if man love Jhesu Crist  
lasse than hym oughte. forsothe, the dede  
of this venial synne is ful perilous; for it  
amenueth the love that men sholde han to  
God moore and moore. And therefore if a  
man charge hymself with manyes wicheve-  
nial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som-  
tyme discharge hym of hem by shrifte  
if they mowe ful lightly ameneuse in hym al  
the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and  
in this wise shippeth venial into deedly  
synne. for certes, the moore that a man  
chargeth his soule with venial synnes, the  
moore is he enclenynd to fallen into deedly  
synne. And therefore, lat us nat be negli-  
gent to discharge us of venial synnes;  
for the proverbe seith: that Manye smale  
maken a greet. And herke this ensample.  
A greet wawe of the see comth somtyme  
with so greet a violence that it drencheth  
the ship. And the same harm dooth som-  
tyme the smale drops of water, that en-  
tren thurgh a litel crevice into the thurrok,  
and into the botme of the ship, if men be  
so negligent that they ne discharge hem  
nat by tyme. And therefore, although ther  
be a difference bitwix these two causes  
of drenchynge, algates the ship is dreynt.  
Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly  
synne, and of anoyouse veniale synnes,  
whan they multiplie in a man so greetly,  
that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth,  
thurgh whiche he synneth venially, is as  
greet in his herte as the love of God, or  
moore. And therefore, the love of every  
thyng that is nat biset in God, ne doon  
principally for Goddes sake, although that  
a man love it lasse than God, yet is it venial  
synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of  
any thyng weyeth in the herte of man as  
muchel as the love of God, or moore. Deedly  
synne, as seith Saint Augustyn: Is,  
whan a man turneth his herte fro God,  
which that is verray sovereyn bountee, that  
may nat change, and yeveth his herte to  
thyng that may change and flitte. And  
certes, that is every thyng, save God  
of hevене, for sooth is, that if a man yeve his  
love, the which that he oweth al to God  
with al his herte, unto a creature, certes,  
as muche as he yeveth of his love to thilke  
creature, so muche he bireveth fro God;  
and therefore dooth he synne, for he that  
is dettoure to God, ne yeldeth nat to God  
al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of  
his herte.